

Lease plan frees funds for investment

TfL has signed a leasing contract for its new London Overground electric trains, freeing up millions of pounds for investment in the transport network.

Leasing, rather than borrowing to buy the fleet of 188 trains, avoids a major capital expenditure. While the overall sums are similar with both options, a leasing arrangement means TfL will not bear the cost of the fleet depreciating in value, and will not risk any loss when selling second-hand rolling stock.

Trains for London Overground will be leased from QW Rail Leasing Ltd, a joint venture between

National Australia Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation. The new vehicles will be introduced from now until late 2010 and the contract will give TfL use of the vehicles until at least 2027.

Managing Director of London Rail, Ian Brown, said: 'This contract gives us all the best features of a new train fleet, including reliability, extra capacity and cleanliness.

'It also gives us much greater flexibility about when we wish to renew the trains in future and releases funds for investment in London's transport network.'

Congestion still down five years on

The Congestion Charge marked its fifth anniversary last month with traffic in the original zone still down by 21 per cent.

The charge was introduced in central London in February 2003. Since its launch, 70,000 fewer vehicles are entering the original zone on a daily basis. Public transport use has also boomed with more than one billion passengers a year using the Tube, a 45 per cent increase in the use of buses and a 43 per cent rise in cycling within the zone.

Traffic in the western extension of the zone, which marked its first anniversary on 19 February, is down by 10 to 15 per cent. Congestion has been reduced by between 20 and 25 per cent compared with similar periods in 2005 and 2006.



To find out about the charge, including operating hours, ways to pay, discounts and exemptions, log on to tfl.gov.uk/congestioncharging

New look for District line train fleet

The last District line train earmarked for refurbishment has now been withdrawn from service.

The refurbishment of the 75-train fleet will offer passengers the benefit of new interiors, CCTV, fire

retardant seats and flooring, plus accessibility measures such as tip-up seats to accommodate wheelchairs, buggies and luggage.

It will help extend the life of the trains until the introduction of a new fleet in 2013.

For more information

Further details are available from: Group Government & Stakeholder Relations, Transport for London, Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL. Telephone: 020 7126 4411 Email: gsr@tfl.gov.uk

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Visit TfL's website at tfl.gov.uk

Terminal 5 – plane sailing for passengers



Photo: BAA

A new era of air travel will start this month when the doors open at Heathrow Terminal 5.

The first people to use the new terminal will arrive on a British Airways flight from Hong Kong, early on 27 March. Around 40,000 passengers will pass through it on day one.

Funded by BAA, construction began in 2002. The terminal now boasts 96 self-service kiosks, 140 customer service desks plus more than 140 stores and eateries.

Getting there will be straightforward. The new rail station is situated directly underneath the terminal and will offer passengers convenient access to the arrivals and departure areas.

Thanks to the new Piccadilly line extension, Tube passengers can travel directly between Heathrow Terminals 1, 2, 3 and Terminal 5, bypassing Heathrow Terminal 4. This will save around 89 per cent of

passengers up to four minutes on their journey time.

In addition, Transport for London (TfL) will be running up to 16 buses an hour linking areas within Greater London, including Southall, Hounslow and Richmond, with the terminal. The routes will operate every day from around 04:00 until 00:30.

Heathrow Express services from Terminal 5 will run every 15 minutes, from 05:07 to 23:42, and will take passengers to Paddington rail station. Heathrow Connect, which links the airport with stations in west London, will offer services between Terminal 4 and Paddington.

Cyclists are also catered for. Those passengers travelling light can benefit from new cycle paths and free parking for bikes at either end of the terminal.

For more information about Terminal 5, go to www.heathrowairport.com/terminal5 To plan your journey, visit tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner

MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



Mayor promises £500m for cycling and walking

The Capital will be transformed into a cycling and walking city over the next 10 years, following the Mayor's announcement of a £500m package of investment.

Five new programmes will change the profile and priority of walking and cycling on London's streets. The aim is that by 2025, five per cent of all daily trips will be made by bike – that's 1.7 million in total.



Did you know?

The Capital has seen a dramatic rise in the number of people cycling, with an 83 per cent increase on London's major roads since 2000. It's estimated that there are now 480,000 cycle journeys each day in the city. However, while 40 per cent of people have access to a bike, only one in eight uses it regularly.

There are also an estimated 5.7 million walking journeys taking place each day in the Capital. It's a sensible option – more than 50 per cent of Tube journeys in central London are quicker on foot.

Programmes include a central London bike hire initiative similar to the recently launched Paris scheme, which will provide up to 6,000 bikes located across docking stations every 300 metres.

Around 12 new cycling routes will also be created for commuters to cycle into London, and bike zones for shoppers and people on the school run will be introduced in both Inner and Outer London.

Additionally, the Legible London street sign system, which provides clear information for people making short journeys on foot, will be expanded.

Another initiative is the 200 Streets of Gold scheme – urban makeovers that will link important local destinations like stations, schools and shops with quality walking facilities, improved pavements, seating, crossings and regeneration measures.

TfL will now consult with local boroughs to develop the plans. Mayor Ken Livingstone said: 'Around 20 per cent of the carbon emissions savings we've calculated we can make from transport by 2025 will come from changing the way we travel.'



London Transport Museum up for top prize

London Transport Museum is among 10 museums and galleries that are in the running for this year's prestigious Art Fund Prize.

The £100,000 award, formerly the Gulbenkian Prize, will be presented in May to the museum or gallery which, among other things, demonstrates originality, imagination and excellence.

Although there are currently 10 entrants on the 'long list', this will be whittled down to four finalists in April. The winner will be announced during May,

which is Museums and Galleries Month.

The Museum re-opened in November last year following a two-year, £22.4m refurbishment and redesign. Londoners can now help its chances of making it into the top four by offering their support via the Art Fund Prize website at www.artfundprize.org.uk. All comments received will be viewed by the judging panel.

For more information about London Transport Museum, go to www.ltmuseum.co.uk

Oyster on the cards for coach passengers

TfL and National Express, the UK's largest coach operator, have joined forces to enable passengers travelling into London to enjoy the benefits of Oyster.

National Express is the first coach company to offer the Visitor Oyster card to customers via their ticket offices throughout the UK and at major airports. The service means coach passengers can purchase their Oyster card before arriving in the Capital so they can travel to their final destination quickly and easily.

Launched in early 2007, the Visitor Oyster card is pre-loaded with pay as you go and is ready for passengers to use as soon as they arrive in central London. Money on the card does not expire so it can also be used for future trips to the Capital.

The announcement is part of TfL's strategy to ensure visitors to London have access to the cheaper options available on Oyster.

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said: 'Oyster continues to be the easiest way to travel around London with over 38 million passenger journeys a week.

'This deal enables us to reach more people coming to London from overseas, meaning that more visitors can get the benefits of cheaper, simpler, and quicker journeys that come with using the Oyster card.'

For more information about Oyster, visit tfl.gov.uk/oyster

Step-free steps up

TfL has welcomed funding of step-free access at a further 13 London rail stations as part of the Department for Transport's (DfT's) £370m Access for All programme.

Nine of the stations were identified by TfL as being a priority. These were Bromley South, New Eltham, Tottenham Hale, New Malden, West Hampstead Thameslink, Brockley, Camden Road, Gospel Oak and Honor Oak Park.

The other four – Walthamstow Central, Limehouse, Ilford and Worcester Park – were recommended by train operating companies.

TfL has also been awarded £37,500 through the DfT's Access for All Small Schemes Fund to provide variable-height ticket windows at Hackney Wick, Homerton and Kensington Olympia Overground stations.



Photo: Visit London Images

London's their Oyster: Visitors can now travel easily to the Capital's many landmarks

Speedy service

When passengers use Oyster to touch in and out on buses, the Tube, Docklands Light Railway and trams, the system automatically works out the correct fare for the journey within a fifth of a second, from up to 1.83 million permutations.

Transport triumph

London Underground (LU) has been named Public Transport Operator of the Year at this year's London Transport Awards.

The ceremony, which celebrates transport achievements across the Capital, took place at the Hilton at the end of last month.

Direct Enquiries (www.directenquiries.com), the LU web service that enables people to personalise their route according to their individual needs, won the Travel Information and Marketing category. King's Cross St Pancras was chosen as passengers' favourite station.